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Creative Baking With Mixes

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Baking is an art and you can be the artist, whether you make it "from scratch" or use a mix. Getting a head start on baking may be easier if you use mixes and other convenience foods. Each homemaker has to consider her family's preferences in relation to her time and energy; then she can decide which convenience foods she will use and which baked products she will make from standard recipes.

Some women use many mixes, others certain ones, and some seldom use a mix. There is a creative satisfaction which many women derive from ingredient baking. Others do "creating" from the packaged mix or partially prepared foods such as refrigerator biscuits. This circular suggests a few ways the homemaker can vary some of today's convenience foods.

Homemakers often can save both time and money by wise use of mixes. Cake mixes are one of the best buys in terms of time and money. Consideration should be given, however, as to whether mixes are bought at regular or sale prices. There is little difference between the cost of biscuit mix and biscuit ingredients. Cake mixes are usually slightly higher than cake ingredients. Pie and cooky mixes may cost as much as 1½ times the cost of those made in the conventional way.

The time saved depends upon the homemaker's skill. In general, if you use mixes you can save about the amounts of time shown below.

Cake mix	⅓ of the time
Cooky mix	½ of the time
Biscuit and pie mix	¼ of the time

Answering the following questions will help the homemaker decide whether or not to use a mix.

1) Which end products seem to her to have the best quality?
2) How important is her time?
3) How much consideration does she want to give to cost?
4) Does the family have definite preferences?
5) How many ingredients such as milk, butter, and eggs does the family produce?

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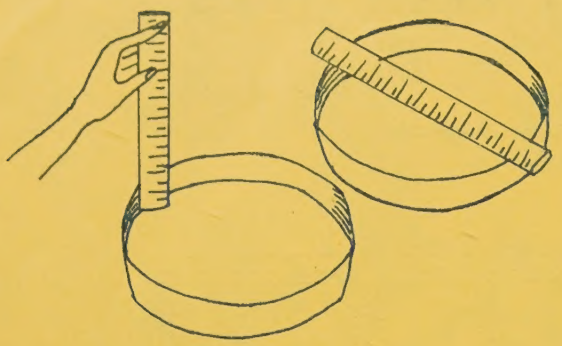
Sizing Up Your Pans



The right pans and standard measuring equipment can spell success or failure in using a mix. Most mix boxes give recommended pan sizes. These measurements are inside ones and are measured from the top rim to the opposite top rim. Shiny pans are best for most baking—the shinier the better. Pie pans and bread pans are the exceptions—rich, golden brown crust comes from using pans with a dull finish. Temperatures should be reduced 25 degrees F. when using ovenproof glass pans.

Recipes Using Biscuit Mix

Nut Bread

- ½ cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1¼ cups milk
- 3 cups biscuit mix
- 1½ cups walnuts, chopped

Heat oven to 350° F. Mix sugar, egg, milk, and biscuit mix. Then beat vigorously for 30 seconds. Batter may still be slightly lumpy. Stir in nuts. Pour into well greased loaf pan, 9″ x 5″ x 3″. Bake 45-50 minutes or until toothpick stuck into center comes out clean. Crack in top is typical. Cool before slicing.

Variations of nut bread

Banana Nut Bread—Follow nut bread recipe except use ¾ cup sugar and only ½ cup milk. Use only ¾ cup chopped nuts and add 1 cup mashed bananas (2 to 3 bananas).

Orange Nut Bread—Follow nut bread recipe except use ¾ cup sugar and instead of milk use orange juice plus 1 tablespoon grated orange rind. Use only ¾ cup chopped nuts. Bake 50-55 minutes.

Fruit Nut Bread—Follow nut bread recipe except use ¾ cup sugar and instead of milk use orange juice. Use only ¾ cup chopped nuts and add 1 cup chopped dried apricots or other dried fruit. Bake 55-60 minutes.

Orange Honey Nut Bread—Follow nut bread recipe except use only ¼ cup sugar and add ½ cup honey. Instead of 1¼ cups milk, use only ¾ cup orange juice plus 1 tablespoon grated orange rind. Use only ¾ cup chopped nuts.

Holiday Yeast Coffee Ring

- 1 package dry yeast
- ½ cup lukewarm water
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2½ cups biscuit mix

Dissolve yeast in warm water. Mix in egg, sugar, and biscuit mix. Beat vigorously for 2 minutes. Turn dough onto surface well dusted with mix. Knead until smooth—about 20 times. Roll into rectangle 16″ x 9″ and spread with the following mixture:

- 2 tablespoons soft butter
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- ⅓ cup chopped candied fruit
- ½ cup chopped walnuts

Roll up tightly, beginning at wide side. Pinch edges together. Place sealed edge down on greased baking sheet. Pinch ends together. With scissors, cut ⅔ way through ring at 1-inch intervals. Turn each section on its side. Let rise in warm place, 85°, about 1 hour. If kitchen is cool, place dough on a rack over bowl of hot water and cover with a towel. Bake 15-20 minutes in 375° oven. Frost with sugar icing made by mixing 1 cup of sifted powdered sugar with 1 to 2 tablespoons of warm water and ½ teaspoon of vanilla.

Variation—One cup cooked raspberry jam and ½ cup finely cut dried apricots make a different filling for yeast coffee rings.

Ideas to try with biscuit mix

Nut Rolls—Mix ½ cup melted butter and ½ cup brown sugar. Spoon into 12 large muffin cups with 3 pecan halves in each. Cover with biscuit dough; bake 15 minutes. Quick and delicious for Sunday brunch.

To vary a meat or chicken pie, add 1 tablespoon onion soup mix to each 2 cups of biscuit mix when making topping. Be sure to stir soup mix before measuring.

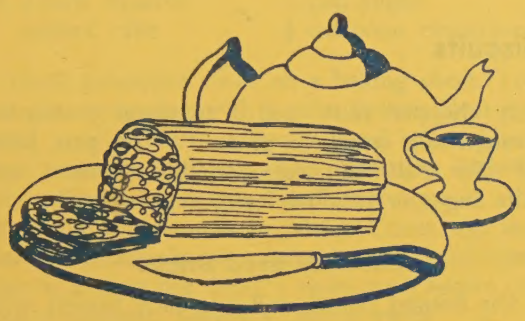
Make richer biscuit dough by using ¾ cup cream or ½ cup milk, ¼ cup butter, and 2 tablespoons sugar to 2 cups biscuit mix.

Recipes Using Muffin Mixes

Nut Bread

1 package muffin mix
1 cup chopped nuts
⅔ cup water

Heat oven to 350° F. Grease 9" x 5" x 3" loaf pan. Follow directions on the box except use ⅔ cup water and 1 cup chopped nuts. Bake 45-50 minutes.



Coffee Cake

Heat oven to 400° F. Grease bottom of 9" x 9" x 1¾" pan. Follow directions for mixing, using 2 envelopes of muffin mix. Sprinkle with streusel mixture before baking.

Streusel

⅓ cup brown sugar
⅓ cup flour
¼ cup hard butter
1 teaspoon cinnamon

Mix brown sugar, flour, butter, and cinnamon. Sprinkle over dough. Bake 20-25 minutes.

Muffin variations

Bacon—Fold ¼ cup crisp, diced, cooked bacon into batter.

Chive—Fold ¼ cup chopped chives into batter.

Cheese—Add ½ to 1 cup grated, sharp, yellow cheese.

Orange—Use ½ cup full strength or reconstituted orange juice for ½ cup of the milk. Sprinkle top of batter with sugar.

Muffin leftovers

Split muffins, place on broiler pan, and toast under broiler until golden brown. Butter immediately or (to save time) butter before toasting.

Cornbread squares or muffins—Toast split muffins which have been buttered before toasting. (Butter is optional.) Serve creamed chipped beef, ham bits, or chicken over the tops.

Yeast Roll Mix

Country Garden Loaf

1 package hot roll mix
2 tablespoons grated celery
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon thyme
¼ cup grated carrot
1 tablespoon grated onion
½ teaspoon sage

A delicious bread to serve with chicken, ham, or pork-chop dinners.

Soften yeast in water as directed on hot-roll mix package. Add the mix and remaining ingredients. Turn out on well-floured surface; cover and let rest 10 minutes. Knead until dough is smooth and satiny, about 10 minutes. Place in lightly greased bowl, turning once to grease surface. Cover and let rise in warm place until double (45 to 60 minutes). Shape in loaf and place in greased 9" x 5" x 3" pan. Cover and let rise until dough is almost double and is slightly rounded above top of pan (40 to 60 minutes). Bake in moderate oven, 375° F., for 45-50 minutes or until done.

Cake Mixes

Because formulas for cake mixes are so carefully balanced, it is very difficult to change or add to a mix in the batter stage. Most variations developed by the companies have been those made after the cake is baked. Some directions are given, however, for addition of nuts, coconut, raisins, etc., but these do not change the basic formula.

When cake mixes were first developed, they were improved by addition of oil. This is no longer true—added oil may cause the dough to be heavy.

Devils Food Mint Cookies

- 1 package devils food cake mix (20 oz.)
- 1 package chocolate bits
- ½ cup chopped nuts
- 1 egg
- 3 tablespoons water
- ¼ teaspoon mint flavoring

Mix cake mix with egg, water, chocolate bits, nuts, and flavoring. Chill until it can be made into rolls. Chill again until quite firm. Slice chilled cooky dough ¼ inch thick and place on greased baking sheet. Bake in 350° oven for 12 minutes. Makes 6 dozen cookies.

Refrigerated Biscuits

Tea Doughnuts

Pull each biscuit in two equal pieces. Fold each piece around 2 large raisins; then roll to form a ball. Cook in 370° deep fat until golden brown. (Doughnuts will turn over when one side is brown). Drain on paper towels; then shake in paper bag with powdered sugar while still warm. Serve hot. A good variation is to fill doughnuts with a teaspoon of jelly or fruit preserves.

Coffee Cake

Separate 1 package of biscuits. Pull each biscuit in half and roll into balls. Dip in melted butter; then roll in mixture of ¼ cup sugar, ¼ cup finely chopped nuts, and ¾ teaspoon cinnamon. Arrange balls snugly in greased 9" pie pan. Bake 450° for 8-10 minutes. Dried mincemeat and white sugar or candied fruits may be used.

Caraway Seed Sticks

On floured board, roll out each biscuit with your fingers into a pencil-shaped stick. Dip in slightly beaten egg white to which one tablespoon of water has been added; roll in caraway seeds. Bake in 450° oven for 8 minutes. For crisper stick, bake 5 minutes at 450°; then bake 10 minutes at 350°. For variety, try coating biscuit sticks with sesame or poppy seeds.

Garlic Ring

Melt ½ cube butter, add 2 small minced garlic cloves. Separate 1 package biscuits. Arrange in circle in 8" cake pan so the edges overlap. Brush tops with garlic butter and sprinkle with grated parmesan cheese. Bake in 425° oven for 8 minutes. Thyme or rosemary can be used instead of garlic.

Cinnamon Rolls

Arrange biscuits on lightly floured board, so that they are one solid mass when patted to ¼-inch thickness. Spread with jam or mixture of nuts, butter, cinnamon, and brown sugar. Roll and cut into slices and put in greased pan. Bake at 450° for 10 minutes.

Commercially Baked Breads

Breadsticks

Quarter each hard roll lengthwise, into 4 breadsticks. Brush all cut surfaces with oil or butter. Roll in *one* of these:

Parmesan cheese	Chili pepper
Garlic, celery, or onion salt	Chopped parsley
	Chopped chives

Toast breadsticks under the broiler.

These are good with Italian dishes or steak dinners. Rolled in chopped nuts, they are good with salad.

Toast Strips

Butter bread slices. Cover slices with grated orange rind mixed with sugar or honey; brown sugar and shredded coconut; cheese spread mixed with horseradish; or grated cheese. Cut in strips and toast in oven.

Desserts from Baked Cakes

Spicy Pineapple Meringue Cake

4 slices canned pineapple, drained	½ teaspoon nutmeg
	4 egg whites
4 2-inch squares bakers' cake	⅓ cup sugar
	¼ teaspoon cinnamon

Place pineapple slices on a baking sheet. Top each pineapple ring with a cake square. Beat egg whites until frothy. Gradually blend in combined sugar, nutmeg, and cinnamon, adding a little at a time. Continue beating until meringue is stiff and glossy and stands in peaks. Cover top and sides of pineapple-cake mounds with meringue. Bake in a very hot (450°) oven until brown, or about 4 minutes. Serves 4. Serve warm.

Buttery Lemonade Sauce for Cottage Pudding

1 (6 oz.) can frozen concentrated lemonade	½ cup butter or margarine
	3 cups water
3 eggs	½ teaspoon salt

Defrost frozen lemonade just enough to turn it from the can. Beat eggs in sauce pan, then add lemonade, water, and butter. Stir together thoroughly while cooking over low heat. Cook about 10 minutes or until thickened. Serve on warm cake squares or day-old cake that has been toasted.

Makes 2½ cups sauce. Some of the sauce may be held in a covered jar in the refrigerator and heated again just before serving. This is a tart sauce; if a sweeter sauce is desired, 2 tablespoons sugar may be added.

Toasted Cake Wedges

Cut leftover un-iced cake in wedges or squares, Split and spread cut surface with soft butter. Sprinkle with sugar-cinnamon mixture. Toast in broiler 2-3 minutes. Serve immediately.

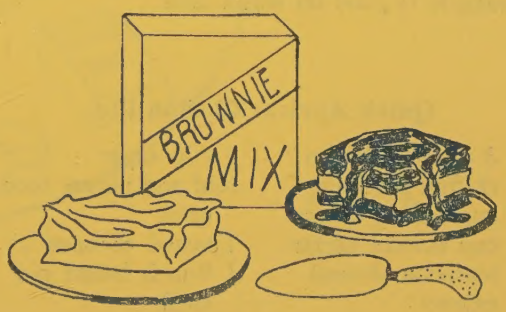
Cool Fruit Dessert

Fill parfait glasses, making alternate layers of small cubes of cake, ice cream, and drained fruit or berries (fresh, frozen, or canned). Top with ice cream and a piece of fruit or a few berries.

Desserts from Brownie Mixes

Brownie Peppermint Pie

Heat oven to 350°. Mix brownies as directed except put into 9″ round pan. Bake 10 minutes. While pie is baking, melt 2 squares unsweetened chocolate (2 oz.), add ¼ teaspoon peppermint extract. Take pie from oven and quickly drizzle chocolate mixture over the top. Bake 15-20 minutes more. When almost cool, cut into pie shaped wedges and top with ice cream. Serves 8-10.



Brownie Alaska

Follow directions for brownie mix. Place cooled brownie on square cooky sheet. Slice a quart of ice cream on brownie square. Cover completely with meringue. Bake 450° for 4-5 minutes, or until lightly brown. Makes 9-12 servings. Serve immediately.

Meringue: Beat 4 eggs until frothy, add ½ cup sugar gradually.

Brownie mix variations

Coconut brownies—Use 1 cup chopped coconut instead of nuts.

Date brownies—Use 1 cup chopped dates instead of nuts.

Mincemeat brownies—Use ½ to 1 cup mincemeat instead of nuts.

Brownie ice-cream sandwiches—Bake cake-like brownies. Cool. Split each brownie. Fill with favorite flavor of ice cream. Top with chocolate sauce—may be flavored with mint.

Toppings and Fillings

"Always on Hand" Topping

- 2 tablespoons instant pudding
- ½ cup ice water
- ½ cup instant dry milk solids
- 3 tablespoons sugar

Mix instant pudding and dry milk solids. Add ice water and beat until stiff (approximately 15 min.). Then add sugar, stirring gently.

This makes a fine topping which stands up for about a day in the refrigerator. It is a very acceptable filling between layers of cakes or in other places where whipped cream might be desirable.

This topping always can be on hand and is low in calories.

Vanilla Custard Topping

Follow directions on vanilla pudding mix package—except increase milk to 3 cups. Cover, cool. Serve on cake or other desserts.

Broiled Icing

There are many possibilities. One of the simplest is to spread marmalade over the warm cake and put in broiler until top is bubbly. Orange marmalade is good on white cake.

Quick Apricot Chiffon Pie

- 1 3 oz. pkg. lemon chiffon pie filling
- ½ cup boiling water
- 1 cup apricot nectar
- ⅛ teaspoon almond extract
- ⅓ cup sugar
- Red and yellow food color
- Toasted coconut
- 1 9-inch baked pie shell

Thoroughly dissolve filling in water. Beat in the nectar, almond extract, and 3 drops each of the two food colors (makes orange hue). Add sugar and beat until mixture stands in peaks. Pour filling into baked shell; swirl top. Chill until set. Garnish with coconut.

Banana Butterscotch Cream Pie

- 1½ cups cold milk
- 1 pkg. butterscotch-flavored instant pudding mix
- ½ cup whipping cream
- 2 bananas, sliced
- 1 9-inch pastry shell

Prepare package of butterscotch-flavored instant pudding mix as directed on package using 1½ cups cold milk. Beat ½ cup whipping cream until thick and stir in. Thinly slice 1 banana over bottom of baked pie shell. Turn pudding mixture into pie shell. Chill.

At serving time, slice 1 more banana in a ring on the top. Dust lightly with cinnamon. Serves 6. Can use whipped milk solid or packaged low calorie topping.

Fruit Bars

1 package gingerbread mix
¾ cup lukewarm water
1 cup chopped nuts
1 cup chopped dates

Heat oven to 350°. Make batter as directed on mix package, except gradually add ¾ cup lukewarm water, mixing until batter is smooth. Stir in 1 cup each chopped nuts and dates. Pour into 2 well greased 9″ square pans. Bake 12-15 minutes. When cool, frost with thin icing made by mixing ¾ cup of powdered sugar and 1½ tablespoons of orange juice.

Prune Gingerbread Upside-down Cake

1 package gingerbread mix
2 cups cooked prunes
2 tablespoons melted butter
¾ cup sugar
½ cup water
½ teaspoon ginger
½ cup nuts

Pit prunes; cut in half. Combine butter, sugar, ginger, and water and put in bottom of heavy iron skillet. Sprinkle with cut up nuts; arrange prunes on top with outside down. Pour gingerbread batter into skillet. Bake at 325° for 1¼ hours. Invert pan and remove cake. Serve warm or cold. Serve with whipped cream or try serving with hot applesauce.

Streusel topping for gingerbread

½ cup brown sugar (packed)
2 teaspoons cinnamon
2 tablespoons flour
2 tablespoons butter, melted
½ cup nuts, chopped

Mix brown sugar, flour, and cinnamon. Blend in butter and chopped nuts. Put on top of gingerbread before baking.

Ambrosia Gingerbread

1 package gingerbread mix
1 cup coconut, cut-up

Make batter as directed except add 1 cup cut-up coconut to the batter. Serve with the orange sauce given below.

Orange sauce

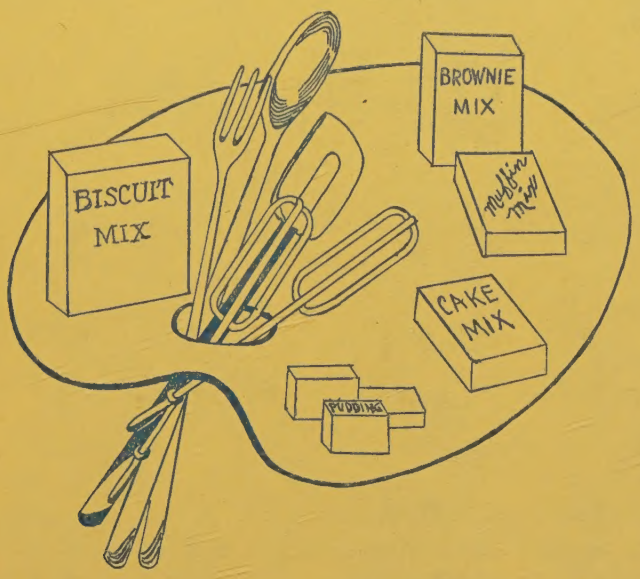
¾ cup sugar
1½ cups cold water
3 tablespoons flour
¼ to ⅓ cup orange juice
2 tablespoons butter
Grated rind of one orange

Mix sugar and flour. Stir water in gradually. Boil 1 minute over moderate heat, stirring constantly. Take from heat. Blend in butter, orange juice, and grated rind of orange.

Butterscotch Ginger Pudding

1 package gingerbread mix
1½ cups brown sugar
1½ cups lukewarm water

Mix batter as directed. Pour batter into greased and floured square pan, 9″ x 9″ x 1¾″. Sprinkle brown sugar over batter. Slowly pour the lukewarm water on top. Bake 25-30 minutes at 350° F. During baking, the gingerbread will rise to the top and butterscotch will form at the bottom. Cut into squares and serve warm. Invert squares on serving plates, dip sauce from pan over each. Can be served with whipped cream or low-calorie topping.



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